THE PERSONAL EQUATION

THE Sunday-school superintendent wore a worried expression as he came into the pastor's study.

"I don't like to bother you after morning worship, Dr. Peters," he said, "but you know that class of boys that Mr. Saltenstall has had? He has given them up. That is the fourth teacher I have had this year for that class, and they've all become discouraged. That class is a hard lot."

"Does the class still stick together?" the doctor asked.

"Oh, yes! No trouble about that," replied the superintendent. "They're there in full force every Sunday."

"There's something to build on there—persistence, at least," said the doctor with a smile. "By the way, who have their teachers been?"

"The best men I could get. All finely educated men—David Coulter, Ed Pease, Joseph Carver, and now, Saltenstall."

"They're all well-trained men," admitted the doctor, "but I wonder if they don't all lack something that is essential in a successful teacher of boys. I mean magnetism. They all *know* enough. But you can't teach a boy into being a Christian, and you can't preach him into it, or scold him into it, or pray him into it. But you can magnetize him into it. Those boys are ready for hero worship; and if we will forget the scholarship end of teaching for a minute and get some red-blooded Christian young man whom they can take as their hero, I think they'll fall in line.

"Even God took that way to get his gospel to men. Do you remember how the New Testament says that 'The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth'? Abstract truth is never as attractive as when it is embodied in a personality. I suppose none of us is very much interested in Scotch Presbyterianism 'in the abstract.' But dress it up in Effie Deans in The Heart of Midlothian pleading with the queen for her wayward sister Jeanie; or as Dr. Maclaren in Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush, and it takes on color and magnetism at once. It has been made flesh. Nor are Baptist doctrines any more interesting as such. But incarnate them in John Bunyan, setting out from the City of Destruction, and we all follow him with breathless interest through Vanity Fair and the Slough of Despond to the Wicket Gate. In him Baptist principles have a relish for every tongue. They are made flesh. That is why a real, live missionary is more interesting than a tract, and a man than a principle. We haven't yet got beyond God's method of making truth appeal through the man who embodies it.

"Give those boys a live Christian man and they'll open their hearts to him and his truth as they do their windows to a morning in May!"

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